

# Theoretical Investigation of Salafi Thought by Emphasizing Akhbarygory

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*Received: March 19, 2015*

*Accepted: May 2, 2015*

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## ABSTRACT

In Islamic civilization, various notions have formed, which were in power in different historical moments. The success of each notion and its social failure could have different reasons and causes, including their intellectual roots. Two groups (Akhbari and Salafi), that are the main components of Shia and Sunni Minorities, - thought not contemporarily – had and (Salafists still) have political power. The essence of these two groups has been investigated from a religious perspective in order to reveal their similarities and differences.

In order to get rid of radical or negligent thought, one should first confess the existence of such perceptions among different Islamic groups and then observe their features in order not to see their development and proliferation again. Avoiding theoretical extremism, which is in itself a factor in practical extremism and violence, is among the objectives of this paper.

**KEY WORDS:** Salafism, Akhbari, Shia, Sunni, interpretation, juridical deduction, Islamic civilization.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In ancient Islamic civilization, there had been different groups and notions. Among them are some groups that had or have political and social power in different historical moments (more than 14 centuries). Regardless of each one's social abilities and success in their social power extension, religious roots of each group play a crucial role in social success of failure.

Two great sects of Islamic civilization (Shia and Sunni) form Akhbari and Salafi minority groups, both of which (though in different eras) had and (though Salafists) has political power and special effects. These two groups have been selected as a sample in this study in order to investigate their essence from a religious point of view to reveal their similarities and differences and possible mutual and independent adoptions.

It is obvious that both of them play a significant role in Islamic world-view. Although nowadays Salafism is regarded as a political and military group, its religious roots shouldn't be neglected. However, in Akhbari era they appeared as a movement against Shia principal faqihes (jurisconsults) and stated a similar message to Salafists in Shia thought as the original perception, which led to different theoretical and practical conflicts. In order to get rid of extremism or negligent thought, one should first confess the existence of such perceptions among different Islamic tribes and then observe their features in order not to see their development and proliferation in the Palladian world again. However, various researches have been conducted regarding each of these two groups, a minimum attention has been paid to the similarities if these two apparently different groups. Emphasizing the necessity of paying attention to the result of thoughts and beliefs, avoiding theoretical extremism, which is in itself a factor in practical extremism and violence, will be among the objectives of this paper.

### The Research Background

One of the best researches with a credible and significant relationship with the topic of this research has been conducted by two university professors: Dr. Mohsen Jahangiri and Dr. Hosein Naseri (although their research was somehow short). In the results of the abovementioned research we read: the encounter of these two movements with Ijtihad, negation of rationality in commandments, unjustifiability of reasoning and rational logics in understanding religion and a complete reliance on religious stories are among the most important homogenous and congruent items between these two groups.

Another research titled "Rationalism and Pragmatism in Shia Political Jurisprudence (Fiqh)" considers the element of reason and investigates its historical backgrounds to state: "... finally, with the help of intellectual domination of Ash'arites and combining it with political power, rationalism was removed from Islam and a long period of intellectual solidity was dominated in Islamic societies as Ash'ari sect."

In another research, Jafar Sobhani describes Salafi group in terms of disregarding reason which is similar to Akhbaries. A group (of Salafists) considers only the Book and Sunna as augment and does not seek reason's decisions. He, then, provides some examples of disregarding reason in religion understanding and beliefs and shows the spoilage of Salafi thought.

Abass Najafi Firoozjahi in a paper titled "Intellectual foundations of Al-Qaeda and Wahhabism" recounts the theoretical and pragmatic features of Salafists and states that: "apparently, grasping the surface of Quran words and Sunnah, without observing the interpretation and considering rational foundations, and regarding anything which cannot be found in Quran and Sunna as an innovation, are the characteristics of this group." In this regard, we can also make reference to Ali Amirkhani's paper titled "Abu Al-Ali Modoodi and Neo-Salafism stream" and a paper by Mahdi Farmanian titled "Salafism and Accede" and a paper by Mohammad-Ali Akhavian titled "Components of Ebadi recommendations in conjunction of Imamiyyah (Twelver) and Salafism", etc.

## **2. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research is conducted according to a library and documental approach. Various documents including published books, papers, foreign and Iranian journals, E-books in digital libraries, as well as Credible Internet essays and papers have been utilized. The information are collected, analyzed and finally compared and summarized according to the main points of the paper. In doing so, the existing standards in phenomenological and methodological areas are used and the notions of two groups are compared. The similar and different cases are concluded using the predefined frameworks.

In this research, according to the applied method, different tools have been used, the most important of which is "note-taking". After referring to documents categorized and identified from different resources, data were gathered in standards fiches including the exact characteristics of the source. The gathered information in fiches was categorized in a logical principle. In this research, the data were collected by referring to different documents in order to identify the topic and deduct the extracted information. After studying the documents, the obtained predicates and knowledge were tested by analogy and comparison (in terms of intellectual notions of Akhbarian and Salafists).

### **3. Findings :**

#### **Akhbari and Akhbarism**

The name "Akhbari", in recent juridical books, refers to a group of Shia Faqihs, whose practical policy in achieving juridical commandments and religious assignments is to follow the Akhbar (news) and Hadith, rather than Ijtihadi (endeavoring) and principal methods. In contrast, Faqihs who believe in Ijtihadi policies are known as Usuli Faqihs (adopting reasoned argumentation). Given this explanation, it is clear that Shia is not divided into two groups in terms of beliefs, but their difference lies in their methodology and the approach to juridical commandments.

Akhbari attitude and its contrast with Usuli perspective dates back to early decades of Shia Fiqh emergence. When the presence of Imams reached its end and the era of Soqra (short) absence begun in 260 AH, two attitudes toward obtaining juridical commandments formed. Being an extension of the presence era, the first attitude that was approved by most of the Imams' followers, believed in sufficiency of Hadith to achieve juridical commandments and avoided invading the Hadith. The eminent figures of this attitude in this period are: Mohammad Ibn Jacob Kalini, Ali Ibn Babooyeh Qomi, and Mohammad Ibn Ali Ibn Babooyeh Qomi, known as Sheikh Sedoogh, who played a fundamental role in gathering the most ancient Fiqhi and Hadithi works and collections (Hashemi Shahroodi, 2008:301).

When an explicit conflict between Akhbari and Usuli groups begun in 11<sup>th</sup> century AH and continued in next centuries, great figures such as Ayatollah Vahid Behbahani emerged and gradually Akhbari group lost its power in seminaries. Vahid Behbahani was one of the most influential Usuli Faqihs in defeating Akhbari group. He extended his combat against Usuli from theoretical area to practice and declared praying behind Sheikh Josef Bahrani, Usuli imam, as unlawful (Khansari, 1970:192).

#### **Salafism**

Salaf (meaning forefather) is a key concept in "Salafism" discourse and is regarded as its focus and pivotal part. Therefore, it is essential to get familiar with this concept in Salafism and Wahhabism. "Salaf" Literary means "precedent".

The controversial meaning of Salaf for Muslims is the very meaning perceived by its appearance, and when "Saleh" (meaning righteous) is added, it means precedents who have brought pride and glory for their posterities. From this perspective, precedents are respectful and valued due to their endeavors for preserving the nature of religion and transferring Islamic knowledge to their next generations. However, there is no doubt that their affinity with Be'that (Mohammad's first revelation) era, because of Mohammad's sacredness, is itself a reason for their respect and greatness.

The colloquial meaning of Salaf has its roots in a thought created by Ibn Timieh in 17<sup>th</sup> Century AH. Unlike his precedents, he conceptualized the word "Salaf" and used it in a meaning that, till then, has never been presented by Islamic thinkers. According to Ibn Timieh "Salaf refers to those people that lived in three centuries

of better Islam and possessed all the excellences and are more competent in solving any problem."(Ibn Timieh, 1961:96).

He also considers the method of Sunnah sect as separate from following Mohammad, and as a complete follow of Salaf. Ibn Qaim, Ibn Timieh's student, continues this path and opens a chapter titled "The Effects of Fatwain Salafist and fatwi works". The end of this chain reaches Wahhabs, who say: "we believe that innovation – what happened after the first three centuries – unlike some people who divide it to good and evil, or to 5 kinds, is absolutely faulty." (Alnajdi, 1969:51).

### **Comparing the Akhbari and Salafi judgments**

#### **A. The development of reason in Shia**

The ability and pride of human reason to understand the juridical commandments is an old topic, as old as the beginnings of Fiqhi movements among Muslims. They had mostly respected reason in belief area and even believed that religion's acceptance is owed to reason, but in commandments they adopted different approaches. The first interesting thing about Imami Faqih's sayings is their dispersion and heterogeneity toward reason. A group decreased the role of reason to a tool and another group considered it as one of the Ijtihad pillars (Jahangiri and Naseri, 2008:81).

The first person who regards reason as just a tool in Ijtihad path is Sheikh Mofid (413 AH)(Mofid, 1994:28). According to Sheikh Mofid's sayings and anecdotes it seems that Fiqh resources are just "the Book and Sunna" and reason has no duty save helping the religious person to reach the main and original resources.

However Sheikh Toosi (460 AH) also has spoken about reason's commandment, but he has not affirmed its implication (versus instrumentation) role in juridical commandment. (Toosi, 1987:38, 41, 111, 290).

Ibn Edris Helli (598 AH) is the first Imami Faqih who has placed reason next to Quran and Sunna as a resource. (Helli, 1990:18).

The first Imami Faqih who speaks explicitly about rational reason, is Fazel Tooni (1071 AH). He separates rational sovereignty from rational non-sovereignty, and divides rational reason into seven types (Tooni, 1992:35).

After him we can follow the trace of rational reason in Mirzaye Qomi's (1231 AH) works including his "Laws of Usul" or Sheikh Ansari's (1281 AH) "Fara'ed Al-Usul"; however, they lack the details of Fazel Tooni in their works.

#### **B. Akhbarismand reason**

Although there are various interpretations of reasoning in religious area among Akhbari people, their common result is that reason is unable to understand religious commandments and their measures. Although, Akhbari group is not the only group that has little and multi-aspect words about reason's proof, but as it was mentioned, rational reason is not so clear and transparent for Usuli group, too. Mozafar writes:

"Since the rational reason is not clear, Akhbarian started to blame Usulies ... however, their own concept of rational reason is not clear; nevertheless the aim of rational reason must, versus the Book and Sunna, be rational commandments that lead to determinism in juridical commandments." (Mozafar, 1989:112)

But when one analyzes Akhbaries' words, it can be found that they had different position in relation to reason.

"Some of them [Akhbarian ] after accepting that the actions, instinctually and before getting any commandment from lawgiver, possess a natural good and evil, have doubted about the ability of reason to understand this goodness and evilness without any help from the lawgiver.(ibid) and others have accepted this understanding and reject the attendance of these two (rational and juridical commandments)." Astar-abadi emphasizes that the focus of every assignment is to obey Sharia (religion). As such, he states regarding the goodness and evilness and whether they are rational or juridical that: "there exist two problems: one of them is goodness and badness, and the other is natural incumbency and reverence; and what is important here is the latter, rather than the former." Then he provides this reasoning to proof that the rational goodness and evilness is different from juridical commandment:

"Can't you see that many affairs that are ugly from reason's perspective are not illegal in Sharia, and their negation is not necessitous in Sharia?" (Astadabadi, 1900:41)

But another group of Akhbaries accept both rational perception and its attendance, and are in doubt about the authority of this rational determinism. Another point made by Akhbaries is the issue of incomplete rational predicates or doubts. They divide human knowledge into two classes:

One class consists of predicates that are based on sensations like mathematics and the other one consists of predicates that are not based on sensations nor can be proved by sensational reasons like metaphysical issues that re out of sensation realms. They believe that, only the first class of human knowledge is reliable and the second class possesses no value and one cannot rely on the results obtained from reason. Mohadeth Astar-abadi – founder of Akhbarism – rejects the doubtful rational reason in any form. Basically, he leaves Ijtihad and the opinion based on doubt (ibid, 98, 97, 94, 90); and maybe this is why some people compare his theories to European philosophers.

It can be concluded from the sayings of some post-Akhbaries that. Not only they accept reason among the sensations, but also consider it in axioms, i.e. they accept the attendance of reason commandment and juridical commandment in axioms, but leave it in theories and this obvious rational commandment exists in the principles of religion or some mundane affairs, not in Fiqhi commandments.

In summary, these words are clear about unreliability of some doubts that have been obtained from rational preliminaries (doubtful reason), i.e. following non-quoted in uncertain affairs (being in doubt) is not allowable.

Bahrani writes in weakening some rational reasons that: "what we call reason, if in fact they are, should be accepted by anyone upon hearing them; but we can see that what is called reason by one person, when his enemy hears and understands it, he even doesn't present a weak doubt about that. So it reveals that these stuffs are not natural reasons, but are some weak preliminaries attached by some kindness or bias and are supposed to be reasons, while in fact this is not true." (Bahrani, 1957:112)

Also, there are more spiritual sub-alternate narrations that Mohadeth Bahrani considers them as a cause for the custody nature of Sharia. And as such, there are some more sub-alternate news from Imams regarding this issue that this determined science can be received merely through their obedience (directly or indirectly).

"It has been stated by Imams alternately that the theoretical-judicial commandment cannot be obtained by acquisition and opinion; because it can result in discrepancy about Fiqhi tenets and minutes such as marriage, heredity, atonements, nemesis, transactions, etc. Thus the meaning of prophets' revelation and the descent of Books is destroyed, because their usefulness is their ability to put an end to discrepancies in order to reach perfection." (Bahrani, 1957: 132)

The summary of Akhbari theories about reason is as follows:

1. As is evidenced by Fiqh history, the application of reason in juridical commandments is a tradition that has found its way from folklore thinking into Imamieh and thus lacks the sufficient value.
2. Out religious texts and versions show the perfection and universality of our Sharia and this means that all the commandments required by humans till the Judgment Day are included in religious evidences and there is no need to refer to reason. In addition to that, using reason in receiving the commandment has been blamed and negated from lawgiver. (Astarabadi. 1900:90)
3. The uncertain (doubtful) rational reason regarding the commandments is rejected.
4. Rational reasons regarding juridical commandments cannot provide certainty, although they do provide certainty in foreign topics and doctrinal affairs.
5. Even if one reached the juridical commandment through certain rational reasoning, he should not follow it because in addition to that there exists to attendance between reason commandment and juridical commandment and basically the competence for eulogy and satire does not require juridical reward or punishment, there are a lot of news in negating the pursuit of reason and thought in juridical affairs.

In fact, Akhbari thought is based on two main bases: firstly, the Sharia provided in the Book and Sunna is complete, and secondly, the key of its recognition is merely the Innocent Imam's knowledge and since there exists no innocent person than Imams, so in theoretical affairs, the preliminaries of which is away from sensation, one has no choice but adherence to virtue companions. (Astarabadi, 1900:131) And because Akhbaries consider certitude in commandments possible through the Book and Sunna, all the other sources, that are naturally vulnerable to error and are based on doubtful affairs, are rejected. (ibid, 141, 120, 114, 106)

In Akhbarian ' view, there is no evidence for theoretical juridical commandment but the Hadiths of innocent Imams. These Hadiths include some certain rules that replace the illusions of reason. (ibid, 240)

However, "certainty" of Hadith means certitude in the commandment, a certitude based on two pillars:

- 1- Submitting action to doubt in juridical commandments.
- 2- Confessing the existence of a certain truth in juridical commandments. (ibid, 272, 240, 271, 122, 112)

Therefore, the certitude that Akhbarian speak of and their discrepancy with Usuries is not about certitude in Allah, but is about the certitude in the origin of a Hadith. (ibid, 48)

### **C. Salafism and reason**

Although in theoretical terms there exist some essential differences between Akhbari and Salafi approach in terms of the presence of Innocent Imam in their gravity point of beliefs and thoughts, one can find their common spirit and final goal by deepening his understanding and removing the discrepancies.

Because Salafists like Akhbarian have no certain sections, in any event we are inevitable to mention their conflicts on reason briefly – especially in the realm of Sharia – in order to make their common aspects and pictures more clear.

As it was stated in the early paragraphs, the first wave of Salafism was started by Ibn Hanbal (822 AH).

He summoned Faqihes to refer, in the first place, to the main source, i.e. the Book and Sunnah, and assigned his class to Hadith. He is well-known for his adherence to books and news (Quran and Hadith) and acts unconditionally as the news. However he acted upon the sayings of the companions and analogies. He wanted to approximate between the Book and Sunna. He acted according to the sender and the weak Hadith and preferred it

to analogy, because the basis of Hadith is on the negation of lie. (Ibn Hazm, 95) His main slogan was: do not imitate me nor Malek and Sofyan Soori and Ozaii, and take from the very source that they have taken.

Ibn Hanbal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AH, practices the second stage of dedication to Hadith.

In the second wave, Ibn Timieh and Ibn Qim, both of whom were Hanbali, continued Salafism. Ibn Timieh considered himself as a submitted person to Salaf and believed that: Hagh (Right) is not identified with different men, but one can reach Hagh just from the Prophet and his followers. (Jaberi, 1989: 96)

In order to show the extent of opposition that exists among public Faqihes regarding reason, we point out to Qazali's perspective. Although he is himself one of the Usuli imams and, to some extent, agrees with applying reason, but with his attacks against unsociable Usulies and philosophers, paves the way for Salafi thought. Initially he recounts some stages for reason and lets reason shows itself in just some special levels. He calls the first stage of testimonial cognition "sensational affairs" and then absolute reason (innate), followed by successive messages from the Prophet, etc. In investigating the truth of juridical commandment, Qazali believes that:

"Juridical commandment is an address from Sharia and is not a description for an action, and there is no way for reason into it, and basically there exists no commandment before the entrance of Sharia." (Qazali, 1937:6)

Before that, Ibn Timieh has opposed Salafism for several times. He attacks philosophy and argues that all the discrepancy and opposition in Islamic thought is resulted from logic and extending it to Zenadeqeh (irreligion). He attacks Ibn Roshd and argues that Greek philosophers and its logic is not essentially in Muslims' minds. In fact, Salafism emphasized the close relationship between Fiqh and rhetoric and then philosophy and logic in order to prove that these sciences are secondary to the First Salafism. They believe that Fiqh in primarily eras was a general restriction from the Sharia and submission to its orders, (Tahatavi, 1996, 1:31) but after some time and different experiences it became: the understanding of commandments of Sharia, as a result of Tafsilieh (detailed) evidences. (Jorjani, 1991:73)

In Salafism, reason can only find application as a tool for understanding the quotations and the sayings of Salaf by the support of quotation itself. (Motahari, 1985:45, 47) This is why some thinkers call this viewpoint "the closed theory" an compare it to some sensational philosophers in disregarding reason; because the holders of these viewpoints believe in the inability of reason to understand the supertatural truths of Quran and Hadith. (Jabari, 1989:96)

Sofian Ibn Einieh, a Hadith Faqih, believed that our duty toward the verses on Divine qualities is merely to read them and be quiet; and this is the interpretations of these verses. This viewpoint deprives human from any type of thought and rational plan about the meaning of such verses.

This method of treating these verses is not limited to past Hadith scientists, but it can be observed in the works by contemporary interpreters. For example, Jamal Al-din Qasemi (Qasemi, 2010:516) and Mohammad and Mahmood Al-Hijazi (Hijazi, 1969:63) emphasize this approach in interpreting these kind of verses.

In Ahle Hadith perspective, there is no space for paraphrase. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal avoided any type of paraphrase and perception of Quran verses and the text of Hadith, and emphasized the appearance of texts without any endeavor to analyze them rationally. (Pakatchi, 113) In verses that were apparently a simile, personification and seeing of God, he prohibited paraphrase and was against any long paraphrase, except in a few cases. Usually, Ahle Hadith accept the paraphrase of Quran verses where such a paraphrase has been mentioned in Prophetic narratives or Salaf tradition.

The general characteristics of Ahle Hadith and Hanabeleh in interpreting the Holy Quran can be summarized in the following items:

- 1- Solidity in the appearance of the verses;
- 2- Relying on the quoted narratives from the Prophet and the sayings of the companions in interpreting the verses;
- 3- Rejecting reason and rational evidences in understanding and interpreting the verses;
- 4- Avoiding any type of Daraii paraphrase and perception in interpreting the verses.

The trend of reason-aversion in understanding the Holy Quran gradually faced Ahle Hadith scientists with crucial barriers, so that some of them, like Kalabi, Qalansi and Mahasebi, in spite of arguing that they follow the thought and policy of Ahle Hadith, lose their faith in their precedents and turn to rational and rhetorical discussions, and confirm Salaf beliefs using rhetorical deductions and principal reasons. (Pakatchi, V1, 113) Among Zaherieh also Ibn Hozn Andelosi has turned to reason in a tangible way and has allowed paraphrase in some cases. He emphasizes that paraphrasing the verses should have evidence in another text or consensus, (Ibn Hazm, 2010:378) but in some cases, in interpreting the texts, he has showed reasoning explicitly, without presenting any text or consensus to confirm that. (Ibn Hazm, 2010: 3, 7)

It can be concluded from the abovementioned themes that the beliefs of Ahle Hadith and Salafism in facing with the canonized reasoning are as follows:

1. Relying upon the narratives, whether in beliefs or in canonization of Salafists and their followers; they had a special obligation toward text and, in contrast, were against approbation, analogy, opinion, philosophic books and lecturers, and didn't allow any paraphrase of the Holy Quran. They were known as Al-Hasieh Al-Vazeha, because they relied only on what has been heard or observed from

Muhammad, and believed that the basis of certitude is the very Sunna, which also included the tradition of the companions. The followers of this thought answered any question with a narrative, without any discussion on the causes because they thought that the principle of Hadith was the negation of lie. (Ibn Hazm, 2010: 95)

2. Considering reason as unable to receive juridical commandments: Salafists opposed any rational parade in canonization realm because they believed that the truth of juridical commandment is the address of lawgiver and there is no use and perception for reason before sharia. Therefore, all the rational reasons, such as analogy, approbation and reclamation are rejected by them.
3. Denying Ijtihad and the science related to it: Salafists don't have a good relationship with sciences that are show rational endeavors and are regarded as the preliminaries of Jihad, such as rhetoric, philosophy, logic and Fiqh principles, which were absent in the era of the virtuous Salaf. Ibn Juzi, one of the promoters of this thought in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AH, adheres to the words of Muhammad in order to prove this argument: being satisfied by what has presented in Sunna is better than an Ijtihad that leads to innovation. (Ibn Juzi, 1950: 8)

As such, it is quoted from Ibn Abbas that: looking at a man, who is Ahle Sunnah and calls people to Sunnah and proscribes them from innovation, is a kind of prayer.

He believed that principal imitation is the exact aberrance and obliquity; and it is like rhetoric from this aspect that the role of Satan in its development is undeniable! (Ibn Juzi, 1950: 80, 82)

#### **D. Evaluating and analyzing the approach of the two schools versus canonized reason**

Up to here, the position of Imami Akhbarian and Sunni Salafists in facing with reason as a preceptor of juridical commandments was reported. Now, with a holistic look at the attitudes of these two streams and the adoption and evaluation of their doctrines, one can find their similarities and differences and provide the appropriate bed for Fiqhi, rhetoric, historical and political analyses. Some points as the sum of this view has been made:

- 1- From the genesis of Islam, always there have existed two tendencies and gradually two movements of reason-centered and quotation-centered among Muslims, especially in religious scientists. However, the interference of these two thoughts occurred in Sunni thought sooner and in late 1<sup>st</sup> century AH, but it was explicit in Shia thought from middle 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH, i.e. the beginning of the Short Absence (841 AH). Although, as it was mentioned earlier, the origins of these tendencies dates back to the first century and the presence era. In any case, the reason-centered movement in Fiqhi issues, in addition to paying attention to the trivial commandments and minutes obtained from texts, believed in paying attention to generalities, rules and principles based on Quran, Hadith and reason through Ijtihad; in contrast, the Sunna-centered movement relied on the quotation and focusing of the appearance of Hadith and didn't do anything additional in the form of Quran- and Sunna-based Ijtihad. It is interesting that each of these two sects considers themselves as the only real follower of religion and Sharia and competent for the heavenly reward. (Ansari, 2002: 203)
- 2- The concept of reason-aversion among Akhbarism and Salafism is a doubtful and gradient concept; this means that all the stages and movements of the conservative cannot be considered equally reason-aversive. Therefore, for each of the Sunni movements in Imamieh and Ahle Sunna different levels were mentioned. In the middle stages (Akhbarism and Salafism) both a more radical attitude and a more complete cohesion and a more systemic order was observed. Given the different perspectives of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Timieh, as well as the opinions of Sadoogh and Astar-abadi, we can be more aware of these formations in organizing and dogmatism in thought. For instance, Feyze Kashani, a moderate, animadverts Astar-abadi's ultraism in crediting all the narratives and his attacks of great Mujtaheds (priests). (Kshaf Al-Qota, 1886: 12) As such, Mohades Bahrani criticizes Astar-abadi's extremisms and considers that the differences that he presents between Mujtaheds and Akhbaries are useless and unreal. (Bahrani, 1957: 16, 26m 35, 70)
- 3- Another important point resulted from studying the thoughts of Akhbarian and Salafists is that the differences between these two groups regarding reason are not subsequently nor antecedently. In other words, both groups (regarding their different levels and interpretations) consider reason, through auditory evidences or rational reasons, unable to reach the juridical truths. Till here their inductions are very similar and homogenous and lead to one single fundamental predicate:  
"Religious commandments – especially in theoretical commandments – are not reachable though human reason and can only be obtained through hearing from the lawgiver."
- 4- However, from here the position of the two groups changes and gets a more rhetoric and fundamental aspects. For example, Salafism refers to the appearance of Quran and Sunnah and the tradition of the companions rather than rational deduction, but Akhbaries consider Imams' narrations as the only alternative for reason in juridical commandments, albeit with their special method of interpretation. (astarabadi, 1900: 181)

- 5- As it has mentioned in some theories about the emergence of Akhbarism, (Razavi, 1999: 94) some believe that their emergence has been influenced by the anti-reason movement in Europe. Shahid Sadr writes in this regard that:
- 6- It is observed that Mohades Astar-abadi has a tendency toward sensational school, a school that believes, in cognition theory, that sensation is the basis of cognition. This sensational approach is formed before Akhbarie in European philosophy by John Lock (1704 AD) and David Hume (1776 AD). In any case, a type of thought similarity can be found between the attitudes of Akhbarism and the European experience- and sensation-centered schools. (Sadr, 1997: 43) This is true that Akhbaries, like the Enlightenment philosophers, opposed the absolute rational commandments, but if we want to argue the influence of these two on each other, it is inappropriate in term of some period, as well as in terms of their content, because a movement that criticized the absolute reason begun in 12<sup>th</sup> century AH, while the reason-averse movement of Akhbarism was formed more than 100 years before that date by Astar-abadi. On the other hand, their concepts, methodology and deductions are alien to each other.
- 7- Both movements, after rejecting reason in the realm of commandments, inevitably adhered to the narrations and in order to be able to answer all the events, they were forced to be more flexible in accepting the narrations, so that they declared explicitly that the news from the impaired are superior than reason for us. (Ibn Hazm, V 1: 95)
- 8- One of the different viewpoints of Akhbaries and Salafists lies in their treatment of rational reason. Akhbarian- at least a group of them - consider a status and dignity for ascertained reason, and emphasize its acceptance if it is realized. Their combat against Usulies is more Soqravi, i.e. they oppose just on the realization of some evidences; while Salafists are adverse toward any type of rationalism in the realm of juridical commandments.
- 9- Salafists, given their negation of reason and Ijtihad, are more inclined toward Takhta'e religion, because Tasvib religion, which emphasized the correctness of all the Mujtaheds' predicates, was a solution from public rationalists in order to justify the discrepancy among their Faqihs. Faqihs who dared to use any rational, however based on doubtful reason, to deduct the juridical commandments.
- 10- One of the most important elements in Salafi thought is the issue of text universality, while rationalists accept the imperfection of Sharia, because they believed that juridical statement has showed itself just in the Book and Sunna, and these two are quiet in many new issues. So, we must step toward canonization through Ijtihad and approbation. In fact, reason in this special meaning, is not the discover of the juridical commandment, because basically there is no commandment in Ijtihad chances to be discovered, rather this procedure leads to the canonization of the commandment from Muhtahed and it is clear that the consequence of this image is the theory of Tasvib. On the other hand, Salafists believe in the universality and perfection of Sharia and thus disregard the rational Ijtihadi operations. (Sadr, 1999: 39)
- 11- It seems that Sunni thought, whether Salafism or Akhbarism, although has provided valuable helps in preserving the written heritage and developing the worship spirit in Islamic societies, but unfortunately has played a significant role in Fiqh inefficiency and stagnation of Islamic societies, which can be seen more profoundly in Salafism. The typical example of it is the phenomena of Wahhabism in the past and its proponents in its new forms, who reject many of the modern civilization symbols, and avoid any revolution and evolution in commandments and Feqhi laws. However, it should be confessed unbiasedly that Sunni tendencies among Imamieh had always have a relatively moderate thought, which can be a result of innocent Imam's teachings in encouraging their followers to use their wisdom and reason even in juridical commandments, and more importantly, to apply them in this realm. It can be seen in many narratives that Imams command some of their followers to deduct a juridical commandment from Quran using rational reasoning.

**E. The environmental origins and their effect on rationalism and non-rationalism in the two sects**

A quick look at the history proves that environment plays a crucial role in rationalism and non-rationalism (reason-aversion). The role of environment can be cultural, political, social, etc. (As'adi, 2003: 128)

**E.1. Cultural environment**

When the Holy Quran was descended in a simple and far-from-knowledge environment like Saudi Arabia, there was no necessity for a serious discussion about the meaning of its verses. But after some time, because of the new feature of the Islamic society emerged after the development of the conquests and the introduction of new sciences into the Islamic world, superficiality was no longer an appropriate method. Revolution from a simple environment into a complicated scientific one requires a deeper attitude, to fulfill the time and place requirements.

Basically, one of the factors that divided the antecedent scientists into "Ahle Hadith" and "Ahle Ray" was the environmental reactions that shaped their thoughts. The school of Ahle Hadith was formed in Mecca and Madinah, with their special characteristics. Among these characteristics one can refer to the great treasure of Sunna and commandments of Mohammad and the judgments of his companions, scarcity of new happenings and events in this land and influence from Ashabi tendency, who avoided opinion and Ijtihad. (Alzami, 1996: 417)

But the school of Ahle Ray was shaped in Iraq, a place with completely contrary characteristics. There existed ancient civilizations, different cultures and a revolutionized system of life and most of the events had an aura of innovation in them, which was different from Hejaz. On the one hand, there were few Hadiths for Iraqi people to adhere to, because they had become very conservative as a result of spurious Hadiths. On the other hand, the scientists of this region were under the influence of figures such as Abdollah Ibn Masoud, who preferred the habit of vote and opinion. (Alzami, 1996:419) They were under the influence of the environment in the next periods. In answering this questions that why Ibn Timieh was not successful in his invitation in that time and just a few groups followed him, and just after a long time his student Mohammad Ibn Abd-Al-Wahhab developed it in his own era and was successful to some extent, we can say that the answer lies in the difference in their scientific and cultural environment. Ibn Timieh diffused his thought in an environment that was full of Islamic scientists who could inactive his propaganda; because Sham and Egypt in that time were the greatest Islamic centers and the home for many great researchers and lecturers. But Mohammad Ibn Ad-Al-Wahhab was living in Najd among some wild Arabs who were far from knowledge and science and had the most little information about atheism and theism, and were completely submitted to Ale Saud power and the Sheikh authority. (Sobhani, 1999: 66)

#### E.2. The social and political environment

In discussing the role of social and political environment, the mental characteristics of the rulers, the movements and the social and political events of the Islamic societies is investigated in order to find the relationship of this factor with superficiality.

Rationalism and non-rationalism have been always a function of the rulers' thought. An open-minded and rational ruler opens the doors of wisdom, while a retrogressive and solid-minded ruler doesn't accept the words of any intellectual and political opponent and have fears about creating opponents through stimulation of thoughts. A look at history will prove this obviously. Abubakr, Omar and Osman, through affirming and approving the policy of prohibiting Hadith codification, made a barrier for discussion and intellection about Sunna and Quran in Ahle Sunna. In the one hand, they created an unfounded and inept Ijtihad and opinion which was based of approbation and analogy, and on the other hand, shaped some groups that considered any type of vote and opinion about religious issues as innovation and illegal.

This is while the basis of Imam Ali's reign was on argument, discussion and the best controversy. This is also traceable in the reign of Bani Omayeh Cliffs. Bani Omayeh Cliffs mainly weren't familiar with logic and deduction and open-mindedness, and these concepts basically were irreconcilable with their governmental foundations. This theory was emphasized after Moavie Ibn Abi-Sofyan's era and continued till Marvanian's reign. (Atavan, 1992: 228) But "Soleyman", one of the Bani Omayeh Cliffs, because of his soft policy and reconciliation, reconciled scientists and Faqihes and used their ideas. (ibid, 66-7)

The emergence of Akhbarism movement cannot be separated from the existing political and social issues of Safavi era, so that some believe that the emergence of Akhbarism was, in fact, a reaction against the extremist movements and the actions of Mojtahehs manifested in Akhbarism. (Jaberi, 1989: 225, 259, 272, 279)

In a regressive movement known as Salafism and Wahhabism in last centuries, the role of political supports and tendencies cannot be denied. Mohammad Ibn Abd-Al-Wahhab, before publishing his invitation successfully in "Dar'ieh", failed in "Eynieh" and "Harimeleh". However, with the financial support from the Emir of Dar'ieh, Mohammad Ibn Masoud, and his military power, he could publish his invitation and this support relationship with Wahhabies has been preserved till today. (sobhani, 1999: 236, 234) Therefore, the extended effect of social and political environment on non-rationalism and superficiality, which naturally will appear in Quran interpretation, was specified briefly.

#### F. Understanding and interpretation of Quran between the two groups

This principle has been accepted among people with hermeneutic view of Quran and religious texts, and states that Quran, like all other human texts, is seeking to imply its meaning and concepts in the form of words and phrases. Although, Muslim researches have accepted that this is a spiritual utterance and all of its words, phrases and compounds have been descended through inspiration to Mohammad, and its realm is preserved from any human seizure, even innocent Imams. (Hadavi, 1998: 45, 60)

So to speak, words in Quran have been used like human words for implying their intentions and special concepts and an interpreter should try to perceive their meaning and use external information and attaching various Quranic topics to extract the hidden meaning of the verses and discover the paraphrase within his own ability.

While Quran has one single appearance, according to religious narratives and the acceptance of all Muslims, possesses some "labyrinth-like", various ventricles. Discovering these ventricles depends on the interpreter's familiarity with Quranic concepts and ideas in one hand, and his intellectual relationship with these concepts on the other.

There exist three viewpoints in the apparent meaning of Quran:

The first one belongs to Shia Akhbarian and Sunni Salafists' view. According to this viewpoint, the very meaning understood at the moment of the decent of verses is credible and any other meaning that was not understood, even if the possibility of it existed, is not credible and is considered a kind of innovation in understanding and is rejected.



However, Shia Akhbaries limit the understanding and presenting the meanings and ventricles of Quran to the innocent Imams, and consider their understanding of Quran credible and prohibit direct reference to Quran for non-Imams. But Sunni Salafists exclude these affairs to the companions and the followers and reject any new understanding except their understanding. (Nasr, 2010: 12)

On the other hand, there exists a contrary viewpoint that believes the meaning of Quran verses varies appropriately with the interpreter's information and there is no standard meaning for them. While some of them consider the mental aspect of the interpreter, the objective aspect of the verses is also important for them and they accept a kind of dialectical influence and effect between the interpreter and the text. (Nasr, 2010: 12, 13) And some others repute the meaning of the text entirely and rely on the interpreter-created meaning. They believe that words are hungry for meaning not its bed; and it is the interpreter who put meaning into the words. (Hadavi, 1998: 367)

But a viewpoint accepted by most of Shia scientists, is the conceptual credibility that the possibility of understanding existed at the moment of verses descent. (ibid, 369)

However, such an understanding has never come to action and has not been received to us. So if a meaning cannot be understood from Quran, and is not understandable in the light of nowadays knowledge and belongs to the contemporary human's achievement, it would be insecure.

#### **4-Discussion and conclusion:**

Totally, after the extensive research conducted in this study, the results are presented according to four pivotal questions of this thesis:

##### **1- What are the fundamentals of Salafism?**

Salafism has presented several arguments and opinions in different areas. It should be bear in mind that Salafi thought (apart from the violent and non-Islamic behaviors that are nowadays introduced as Salafism), is taken from Islamic texts and thus has major similarities to Sunni thought, and more generally, to Muslims. A summary of Salafi theories is identifiable in the following four topics:

##### **A. Theism**

Ibn Timieh (as the most pivotal intellectual of this group) has referred to theism and its method repeatedly. Barely one can find arguments in his books that are in contrast to the accepted Sunni thought. He always has mentioned God theism and action theism, and has invited Muslims to pay attention and observe them. What distinguishes him from other Muslims in terms of theism, is not related to the argumentative aspect of theism, but lies in what he regards as the negation and contrary to theism.

Ibn Timieh, by adducing to a few verses of Quran, tries to condemn any resort and intercession to anyone except God.

He assumes that visiting Mohammad's temple or any virtuous person's temple, if is accompanied by a request (Hajat) like intercession, is a kind of antitheism because no one can do that except God and the doers should repent immediately or die.

Such an opinion can also be seen somehow in Seyed Qotb (a recent Salafi thinker), in plea of purging antitheist beliefs. Seyed disapproves the Islamic ideological characteristics of worshiping spiritual leaders.

##### **B. The extraordinary importance of the beginnings of Islam**

Another common belief among Muslims, double emphasized by Salafists and fundamentalists, is the necessity of modeling the beginnings of Islam and the importance of the events and persons of that time. Their emphasis on this period is consistent with a methodological principle of Salafism, i.e. text-centrism.

Ibn Timieh has always wanted a return to the initial Islam in past time, without any interpretation and change. The beginnings of Islam, the status of Mohammad's companions and the aura depicted in historical books are also inspiring for Seyed Qotb. He repeatedly mentions such a space and wants to revive it. Seyed Qotb recounts three important feature for the beginnings of Islam the is going to be a model for modern society: first, paying attention to Quran as the guide and the only leader of practical living; second, the method of treating Quran which is different to the modern one; and third, full consideration of Muslims in the beginnings of Islam to the opposition and additivity of ignorance thought and Islam.

##### **C. Ambivalent world-view**

The difference between the age of ignorance and Islam, and their complete contradistinction, is one of the main chapters in Seyed Qotb's thought. Although such a difference is a result of Islamic teachings, adjusting the realities to such a black-and-white attitude seems impossible. Because in the real world sheer null or sheer right cannot be found, while Seyed Qotb tries to model the current status of the world in its zero point and find one single right and one single null. The importance of this bipolar world is that it facilitates emotion stimulation for fundamentalists and enters them into a battlefield between the absolute right (like Mohammad's companions) and the absolute null.

##### **D. Universality of religion**

Muslims' beliefs in the universality of religion have little differences with fundamentalists' beliefs, but an especial emphasis on this teaching can be very insightful. However, fundamentalists have some discrepancies on this topic among themselves.

In Medieval works by Salafists, including Ibn Timieh and Ibn Juzi, this belief is not emphasized extremely, because most of the issues of Muslims were solvable by referring to the Book and Sunnah and Imams' quotations and judgments. But in contemporary fundamentalism or Salafism, there are different types of reactions to this: first, unsociable Muslim groups like "Tabliqi Jama'at" in India and Pakistan, who have accepted a kind of secularism in order to avoid politics, and thus they have not confronted the necessities of theorizing about the universality of religion, and in case of confronting them, they have answered using two strategies: separating religion from the universe, or throwing down the contradictory element. Having emphasized the universality of religion, the second groups, like Akhavan and Wahhabies, try to resolve all the contemporary issues by including them under one of their different chapters on the commandments.

It is clear that fundamentalists should present some proofs for the stability of the juridical laws regarding the completely different contemporary environments and the status of Islam beginnings.

## **2- What are the mental foundations of Akhbarism?**

The following three items are the most important similarities between this group and other Shias.

- A. Belief in the totality of religion in Mohammad's time,
- B. The required principles and rules for understanding and deducting the commandments have been stated by the companions and Faqihes though Imams.
- C. Like other Shia Muslims, Akhbaries believe that doubtful Ijtihads and deductions are not credible.

But the exclusive mental foundations of Akhbaries are:

- A. Many Akhabyrian assume that the only source for understanding the judicial commandments is Sunna (Hadith). They believe that the evidence of juridical commandments and issues, main or secondary, so long as are not among the necessities of religion, can be heard just in Imams' words. From the perspective of this Akhabyrian, even Muhammad's Sunna is not one of the sources for commandments. Some Akhabyries. Including Mola Mohsen Feyz, believe that the source of the commandments, in addition to Hadith, is the texts and the manifestations of Quran and Mohammad's Sunna.
- B. Given the abovementioned component, Akhabyrian reject other sources, i.e. reason and consensus, as the sources of judicial commandments.
- C. In Akhbari view, knowledge of the commandments is incredible, unless it is documented by Sunna or the Book. Therefore, the certainty resulted from consensus and rational preliminaries is not credible.
- D. Because Akhbaries believe in the necessity of learning in discovering the juridical commandment, they reject doubtful sections.
- E. According to Akhbaries, absolute Mujtahid is impossible. Given the beliefs of Akhbaries on the path of juridical commandment through texts from the innocent Imams, and because in some parts and issues there exists no text, so we have no determined reason and we can discredit the Ijtihads and so absolute Mujtahid is impossible.

## **3- What are the intellectual similarities between Salafists and Akhabyrian ?**

- 1- Maybe the most obvious similarity between these two groups is that both of them can be easily called "reason-averse". Neither Akhabyrian put reason in one level beside inspiration and Sunna, nor do Salafists pay attention to it.
- 2- Reason-aversion among Akhbarism and Salafism is a doubtful and gradient concept, i.e. all of the conservative movements cannot be regarded as equally reason-averse. Therefore we mentioned some levels for each of the traditionalist movements in Imamieh and Ahle Suuni.
- 3- It can be seen in some cases that some traditionalists' deductions (Akhabyrian and Salafists) are themselves formed by rational predicates. In fact, they have utilized reason to surpass reason. For example in Salafism, in private treatment of rational deductions, they frequently refer to Qazali classifications, all of which have rational color. As it was mentioned earlier, he classifies the stages of cognition, and rejects reason's entrance into the juridical. And in Akhbarism the words of Astar-adabdi and Mirza Mohammad Akhbari are proofs on this argument.
- 4- Both movements, after throwing down reason in the realm of commandments, inevitably resort to the narratives, and those who couldn't answer all the events were forced to be more flexible in accepting narratives, so that they declared that weak news are superior than reason's acceptance for us.
- 5- It seems that the traditionalist thought, whether Salafism or Akhbarism, although has provided valuable helps in preserving the written heritage and developing the worship spirit in Islamic societies, but unfortunately has played a significant role in Fiqh inefficiency and stagnation of Islamic societies, which can be seen more profoundly in Salafism. The typical example of it is the phenomena of Wahhabism in the past and its proponents in its new forms, who reject many of the modern civilization symbols, and avoid any revolution and evolution in commandments and Feqhi laws.

## **4- What are the intellectual differences between Salafism and Akhbarism?**

Some differences between Salafists and Akhabyrian are as follows:

- 1- By comparing the opinions of Akhabyries and Salafists, it can be found that the mechanisms of anti-rational movement in Akhabyrian like Astar-abadi has a more sophisticated and advanced infrastructure

- than all the other Salafī tendencies. The most typical document in this field is Astar-abadi's famous book, which addresses his attitudes against reason in a completely "Mostofi" way.
- 2- Although both groups (considering their various levels and interpretation), consider reason as unable to reach juridical truths and their deductions are similar in stating that the religious commandments are not achievable through human reason and can be obtained only through hearing from the lawgiver. But from here, their positions differ and get a rhetoric and basic aspect. For example, instead of resorting to rational deduction, Salafists refer to Quran appearance and the Prophet's Sunna and the companions' traditions, but for Akhabyrian the only alternative for reason in juridical commandments is Hadith, with their own special method and interpretation.
  - 3- A different perspective for Akhabyrian from Salafists, lies in the way they deal with rational reason. Akhabyrian - at least a group of them – consider a status and dignity for a certain reason, and emphasize its acceptance that, if it is realized, but Salafists, are absolutely incompatible with any form of rationalism in religious orders.
  - 4- Salafists have shown a greater willingness toward the negation of reason and discretion, toward discredit religion, because Tasvib religion, which emphasizes the accuracy of all statements by Mujtaheds, was a solution from rationalists to justify the difference in the eyes of their Faqihs. Faqihs who would allow themselves to infer the religious commandments, utilized any method, even though the rational approach.
  - 5- Akhabyrian like the Salafists, believe in the perfection of Sharia, but are distinguished from them in two ways: First, unlike Akhabyrian, Imami Usulies do not confess to discrepancy of the Sharia, and second, given the persistence of religious expression by the Imams, the perfect view of the Sharia enjoys a higher approval and strength.

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